

PREPARING FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER

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*“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer;
and then was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers
of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.
And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints,
ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.”
Revelation 8:3-4*

I SUPPOSE that there will be very little doubt among you that the “angel” mentioned here was either our Lord Jesus Christ Himself or a special angelic messenger sent to represent Him. You remember that under the Mosaic dispensation, there was to be an altar of shittim wood, overlaid with pure gold, and that Aaron was to burn sweet incense thereon every morning and every evening.

In like manner, our great High Priest is here represented as standing at the golden altar which is before the throne of God, having in His hand a golden censer full of incense, the fragrance of which would give acceptance to the prayers of the saints for His sake

*“Great Advocate, almighty Friend,
On Him our humble hopes depend:
Our cause can never, never fail,
For Jesus pleads and must prevail.”*

I am going to talk to you, first, concerning *the prayers of the saints*. Secondly, concerning *the intercession of Christ*. And then we shall notice *the result of the sending of Christ's intercession with the saints' prayers*.

I. So first, I am to speak about THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS.

What a very interesting and delightful spectacle the Christian church will present during the coming week of united prayer! It is an everyday sight to see Christians at prayer, for believers are to “pray without ceasing.” But doubtless, as long as the church exists and men and women are what they are, there always will be special seasons when the fervor of the suppliants becomes more ardent than at ordinary times, when their desires grow more intense, and their prayers therefore ascend in a greater volume before the eternal throne. We sing that,

*“Satan trembles when he sees,
The weakest saint upon his knees,*

then how much more must he tremble when he sees thousands upon thousands of the people of God drawing near with one heart to the throne of the heavenly grace!

Next to the angels in heaven praising God, I think the fairest sight that ever was seen is that of the saints of earth, of almost all names and denominations, gathered in concert around the mercy seat. Notwithstanding all the divisions among Christians, there are certain truths upon which they are all agreed, and this will be plainly manifested during the coming week.

We shall see, met together in the same house of prayer, brethren holding various sentiments. We shall see some who love the Lord Jesus Christ in the Established Church and others who are outside the establishment uniting heartily in prayer. We shall see those who worship God in a liturgical sense and those who worship Him without a liturgy, joining with one heart and mind in imploring a blessing upon the one common cause of Jesus Christ and upon the world at large.

Moreover, these united prayers will be going up all over the world, at least it will be so to a very large extent. You may journey round the globe with the sun, and wherever you go you shall see brethren assembled in prayer. It is said of the Queen's dominions that the sun never sets upon them, and it may be said this week of the earnest united cries of the Lord's people, that they will arise from practically every land on which the sun shall shine. God shall be worshiped day and night, not merely by a few stragglers here and there, but by the great bulk of the

“One army of the living God.”

This is true every day, to a greater or lesser degree, but it will be made more apparent during the days of this week, and I, for one, rejoice that the prayers of the saints shall thus together ascend before the throne of God.

It is interesting, too, to notice the subjects that have been selected as themes for special prayer. I think the Lord has guided the committee of the Evangelical Alliance in the selection.

We are requested on Monday to present “penitential confession of sin and the acknowledgment of personal, social, and national blessings, with supplication for divine mercy through the atonement of our Savior, Jesus Christ.” This is a good beginning for the week of prayer, it should rightly commence with repentance. The salty tears of penitence will be an acceptable offering, just as under the Levitical law it was commanded, “with all your offering you shall offer salt.”

Then on Tuesday we are asked to pray for the conversion of the ungodly, for the success of missions among Jews and Gentiles, and for a divine blessing to accompany the efforts made to evangelize the unconverted of all ranks and all around us.” What a comprehensive subject, taking in both Jews and Gentiles, both bond and free, and including those who are abroad with those who are around us at home!

Then on Wednesday our supplications are asked “for the Christian church and ministry, for Sunday schools and all other Christian agencies, and for the increase of spiritual life, activity, and holiness in all believers.” Here again is a comprehensive subject. How much we who are in the ministry need your prayers! “Brethren pray for us.” The whole church needs prayer, but especially the captains in the Lord's ranks who have to be in the thick of the fight, with the shots of the enemy flying all around them.

Then on Thursday the subjects for intercession are “for the afflicted and oppressed, that slavery may be abolished, that persecution may cease, and that Christian love may expand to the comfort and relief of the destitute in all lands.” I do not know how some professing Christians will be able to join in the supplication that slavery may be abolished, but we can unite in it with a pure heart fervently. May the Lord graciously hear that prayer, and if He shall hear it from the battlefields of America, we shall bless His name even for the scourge of war, if that accursed slavery can be ended.

Then on Friday we are urged to pray “for nations, for kings, and all who are in authority, for the cessation of war, for the prevalence of peace, and for the holy observance of the Sabbath.”

And then to conclude, on Saturday, “generally for the large outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the revival and extension of pure Christianity throughout the world.”

Now when the church comes before God with such large requests as these, I do earnestly trust that the united supplication will be the means of bringing down one of the greatest and richest blessings that the world has ever received. God grant that it may be so!

*“Who but You, Almighty Spirit,
Can the heathen world reclaim?”*

*Men may preach, but till You favor,
Heathens will be still the same.
Mighty Spirit,
Witness to the Savior's name.*

*All our hopes, and prayers, and labors,
Must be vain without Your aid,
But You will not disappoint us.
All is true that you have said
Gracious Spirit,
O'er the world Your influence spread."*

But turning away from that aspect of the church's prayers which will be presented during the coming week, I want you to notice some points suggested by the text concerning the prayer of the saints. The first is the communion of all prayer. What does the angel do with the prayers of all saints? Does he put one of them here and another there? Does he put one on the altar and another under the altar? No, no, he puts them all into the golden censer.

Here comes a praying full of faith from a warm and loving heart filled with ardent desires for God's glory, and behind it comes another, a poor starveling prayer. It is sincere, but it comes from the lips of Mr. Little Faith. There is not much fervor about it, but it is as much as that feeble brother could pray. Both these prayers are put into the some golden censer.

Some of you Christian people have believing friends in Australia. They pray, and their prayers get into the censer. You pray, and your prayers get there, too. Our fathers prayed, and their prayers were put into the golden censer. We pray, and our children will pray after us, but our prayers and theirs and our fathers' shall all go into the same censor. What communion there is here, then, among all believers in Jesus!

When you really draw near to God and other saints draw near to Him, you also draw near to them. Nay, more, since Jesus Christ Himself prays, when you pray, you have fellowship with Him. And as the Holy Spirit inspires your prayers, if they were according to the mind of God, you have fellowship also with the Spirit, and through Him with the Father. Thus prayer becomes a glorious bond which binds God and all His people together in one sacred bundle of life. And to be without prayer is to be outside that blessed bundle.

The next thing I ask you to observe is the universality of prayer. The incense was given to the angel "that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." I have already pointed out to you that Jesus Christ takes the prayers that come from all sorts of saints. Now I want you to notice that he takes all the true prayers that come to Him. There are some prayers that are so little and so feeble that you would think that they never could get to God at all, but it is with them as it was with some of the creatures in Noah's ark. I never can comprehend how the snails managed to get into the ark, yet they did. They must have started very early.

There are some people's prayers which seem to travel almost as slowly as those snails did, yet they do get to heaven and they are presented by Christ with all the rest of the saints' prayers before His Father's throne. If you take a single drop of water from the sea and analyze it, you will find that the same elements are in it that are in the whole ocean. So if I can breathe but one sincere desire towards heaven, if my prayer is merely,

*"The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near,"*

all the elements of prevailing prayer are in that one desire or that one childlike glance. A diamond is a diamond be it ever so small. It may be so tiny that the Queen would not put it into the most prominent

place in her crown, still it might be permitted to glitter somewhere. Being a diamond, it must not be thrown away, for it has its value.

So, my brother, your prayer may never edify your brethren, it may not be suitable to be presented in public, but if your soul is in it, if your heart goes out towards God through your poor feeble prayer, it will be so precious in His sight that He will not have it thrown away. In the day when Christ makes up His jewels, that tiny gem shall be presented to His Father as well as the greatest and costliest jewels under His charge.

I say this because I am aware that there are many Christians who think their prayers are not heard because they are such poor things. But we are not impartial or wise judges of the value of our own prayers. I am persuaded that often, when we think we have prayed as we ought, we have only been feeding our own vanity and that at other times, when we have found that we could not pray, that we could hardly express a single desire, but could only sigh and groan before the Lord, then we have really prayed and God has heard our prayer.

Whatever our own feelings may be about the matter, it is certain that every true prayer gets into the golden censer that our great High Priest swings before the eternal throne. There is not one of those birds that we send up towards heaven which does not really reach its destination. If its own wings are not strong enough to bear it up so high, Christ reaches His almighty hand down and lifts it all the rest of the way. Somehow, all the true prayers of all the saints must get into the golden censer in Christ's hand.

Note also *the acceptability of prayer*. God has made provision for ensuring the acceptance of His people's prayers. "There was given unto the angel much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." It is that incense which makes our poor prayers acceptable to God, it is not the merit of our prayers that secures the gracious answers to them, but the power of Christ's prevailing intercession. Our pleas would be useless if they were presented by themselves, it is His plea that always avails with His Father. Jesus Christ has been appointed to this high office so that He may take our supplications and present them before the throne of the Most High.

When our government appoints certain officers to look after the affairs of the poor people of this land, there ought not to be any needy ones applying in vain to them for help. And Christian, as Jesus Christ has been entrusted with the task of presenting your prayers acceptably before His Father, you may rest assured that He will accomplish, it so be of good courage and know assuredly that He will add the "much incense" of His intercession to your supplications, and so shall they ascend acceptably before God in a cloud of sweetly smelling smoke. No true prayer from the heart of a true child of God shall miss its mark—all shall reach the heavenly target.

Your petition, my brother or sister, shall meet with acceptance as well as mine. Do not think, believer, that God will ignore your heartfelt supplications even though you are almost unknown among your fellow Christians and you feel yourself to be the least of all saints, if you dare to think that you are numbered among the saints at all. Do not imagine because you could not put two sentences together at the prayer meeting that therefore your prayers do not reach the ear and heart of God. I can assure you that your petitions are put into the golden censer just as surely as were those of John, the beloved apostle to whom this wondrous revelation was given.

And when the sacred fire is applied to them, they yield as sweet a fragrance to the Most High as do the supplications of the greatest and noblest of the Lord's children. According to the text, the smoke of the incense ascended up before God with the prayers of all the saints, none of them would have been acceptable without the incense, but with the incense all ascended up before God.

II. Now, secondly, I must speak briefly concerning JESUS CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

And first I beg you to notice *what a fit person Jesus Christ is to intercede for us*. He is man. He knows the imperfection of our prayers, He understands our needs and frailties, and can sympathize with us in presenting our petitions before His Father's throne. He is man, who has finished His own work and can therefore take our work into His hands, and bring it to perfection. He is always acceptable to His

Father, so that when He presents our suit before His Father's throne, He has such a claim to be heard because of all that He has done and suffered that His advocacy of our case must prevail.

Moreover, He is also God, "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." If I can have the well-beloved Son of God to plead for me, what other intercessor can I want? Is He not the best advocate of whom your heart can conceive? Nay, more, if He had not told you that it is so, could you have ever dreamed that He, who is the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person, would have condescended to become intercessor for such worthless worms as we are?

O You glorious Christ, in Your wondrous person as both man and God, we worship You with all our hearts, and we bless the Lord that You are our great High Priest with the golden censer, into which our poor prayers shall be put and then, when perfumed with the much incense of Your wondrous intercession, shall be presented acceptably before Your Father in heaven!

*"Immense compassion reigns
In our Immanuel's heart.
He condescends to act a Mediator's part.
He is our Friend and Brother, too,
Divinely kind, divinely true."*

Having noticed the fitness of our Intercessor's person, consider next, *the fitness of the place where He pleads*. He is represented as standing at the altar when He pleads for us with His Father. It is on the ground of His own atoning sacrifice. When He stands at the altar He does, as it were, say to His Father, "I am He that lives, and was dead. My hands and feet were pierced by the nails and My side by the soldier's spear. Hear Me on behalf of those for whom I laid down My life."

Thus our great Intercessor speaks with authority when He pleads for us before His Father's throne. Believer, you are never so prevalent in prayer as when you stand at the altar of atonement. Your supplications are sure to succeed when you plead the precious blood of Jesus. So you may be certain that Jesus will not stand at the altar in vain.

Shall the Father see His Son's blood shed for many for the remission of their sins, and yet not yield to His intercession? O God, can You remember Your Son's agonies and groans in Gethsemane and yet refuse His requests? Can You think of all that He endured at Golgotha and yet not hear Him when He intercedes for those for whom He there laid down His life?

Oh, no, that is impossible! Jesus must succeed when He stands at the altar and presents the prayers of His people before His Father's throne,

*"Jesus, my great High Priest,
Offered His blood, and died.
My guilty conscience seeks
No sacrifice beside.
His powerful blood did once atone.
And now it pleads before the throne."*

Note next how *Christ presents the prayers of the saints to His Father*. He does not offer them just as they are, but He adds to them that "much incense," which makes them acceptable to God. One thing that Jesus does with our prayers is to make them correct where they are in error. Sometimes, dear friends come to me and ask me to send petitions for them to certain people who may be able to help them. But I often find that the words are not spelled correctly, the grammar is faulty, and the petition itself is not very plain. So I say to the petitioners, "I know what it is that you want, so I will write out your petition and add my own name to it, and then it may succeed."

So, dear friends, we bring to Christ our poor petitions, all blotted and misspelled, but He does not present them as they are, He knows what we mean and what we need, so He writes them out for us, puts His own signature at the bottom, and thus they become prayers upon which God can look with approval.

The text says that there was given to the angel “much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.” There is little enough of our prayers in the golden censer that is in Christ’s hand, but He adds much of His merit to them and so makes them acceptable to His Father. As the smoke of the incense ascends up before God, perhaps you say, “I never thought that my prayer would smell as sweetly as that.” No, it would not have done so by itself, but Jesus Christ added the much incense to it and that makes it so fragrant.

When you say, “My prayer is so poor that it will never prevail with God,” you do not know what it will be when Christ has added His intercession to it. If you could pray a prayer that seemed to you a thousand times better than those you now present, I am not sure that it would not really be any better. If you said to yourself, “There, that prayer will do, it will find its way to God all by itself,” I am certain that it would never reach the throne of God. But if, when we have prayed, we feel that we must have Christ’s intercession to make our prayers acceptable, He will add the “much incense” to our poor petitions and so they shall prevail with God.

III. Now, lastly, and very briefly, notice THE RESULT OF THE BLENDING OF CHRIST’S INTERCESSION WITH HIS PEOPLE’S PRAYERS.

When the much incense was offered with the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne, we are told that “the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God.” And Christian, you may have what you will of God if you know how to get the “much incense” of Christ’s intercession put with your prayers. Church of God, you may utterly rout your foes if you can pray after this fashion. If our prayers have prevailed with God, they will certainly prevail against all our adversaries.

The Spartans called their spears their walls, and Christians may well call their prayers their walls. There is a secret of prevailing in prayer which you may know to your heart’s comfort if you will learn the lesson of our text, and then, as your prayer is presented by Christ to His Father, the answer will come down in blessings which many others will be glad to share with you.

I want, in closing, to remind you of the remarkable verses that follow my text. The saints have been praying and Christ has presented their petitions to His Father, what will be the result of their praying and His intercession? If you did not know the context, you would probably answer, “We expect the whole world to be converted.”

But you know that this was not the case. The first of the seven angels blew the trumpet “and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood.” Then the second angel sounded, “and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea.” And so it goes on with woe, upon woe, woe upon woe.

Is this the answer to the saints’ prayer? Yes, it is even so. Whenever the saints are especially earnest in prayer, and whenever their prayers rise up acceptably to God, you may depend upon it that their great adversary, the devil, will not remain quietly at home. What then? Shall we therefore go in fear of the adversary? By no means. He will have all the greater wrath as his time becomes shorter and shorter, but our trust is in Him who is mightier than all the powers of darkness, and who will overthrow them all at the appointed time.

So be not troubled as you read of all the woes following the blowing of the six trumpets, but go on reading until you come to the seventh. There you will get the true answer to the saints’ prayers, all those woes must come first to prepare for the glory that is to follow.

At the eleventh chapter, and the fifteenth verse, you will read, “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” So you see that there shall be a glorious

end to the prayers of the saints and the intercession of their great High Priest. He shall be proclaimed “King of kings, and Lord of lords,” “and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

If, during this coming year, we should see more sin, more superstition, more Popery, and more infidelity than we have ever seen before, shall we say that God did not hear His people’s prayers? Oh no! All these evils must reach their climax and then shall come their downfall. It is not altogether an evil thing to have the devil thoroughly awakened. If we should again have a time of persecution, with more blasphemy and more wickedness than we have ever yet known, the Lord’s people would be stirred up to pray more earnestly than ever, to work with greater zeal for His cause, and to fight the good fight of faith as they have never yet done.

Sound the trumpet, wake up the warriors of the cross, let every good soldier of Jesus Christ gird his sword upon his thigh, for the first result of prayer is battle, storm, terror, earthquake, and woe upon woe. But the end is that to which the eye of faith looks forward, when the reeling, and the shaking, and the tempest, and the whirlwind are all over.

Then shall come the everlasting calm and the triumphant reign of Jesus. “The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” And also, “continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving.”

There may be some here, and doubtless there are some who have never truly prayed in their lives. What a blessed beginning it would be to the week of united prayer if they would begin to pray tonight. But my brother, or my sister, it is no use for you to attempt to pray without faith, “for he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

And what is faith? Why, faith is trust, confidence, reliance upon Christ. If anyone among you will trust the Lord Jesus Christ tonight, if you will put your whole confidence in Him, if you will rely upon Him for time and eternity, especially if you trust to the merit of His great atoning sacrifice, He will prove Himself to be worthy of your trust and He will save you with His everlasting salvation.

Nay, more than that, for if you trust Christ, you are saved, for, “he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” Then when you are saved, you can join your believing prayers to the prayers of all the rest of the saints and your prayers shall be put with theirs in the golden censer in the hand of our great High Priest and He will add to them the “much incense” of His intercession, and so they shall ascend acceptably before the throne of God. May the Lord graciously teach you the holy arts of faith and prayer, for His dear name’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

REVELATION 21:22-27. 22

Chapter 21. Verse 22. *And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.*

It has a temple, that better state, that land of the Well-beloved, but not a material temple that John could see, yet he knew that it had a temple “for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” Where they are is the holy place where all the tribes of the spiritual Israel shall be gathered at the last, to go no more out forever. “The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb” have a glory far greater than Solomon’s temple ever had and far greater even than that later temple which excelled even his in glory.

23. *And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

We have need of both the sun and the moon while we are in this world. If it were not for the great central luminary, the solar system would cease to be and this earth and the moon and all their sister planets would die out in darkness. But when the sun has been turned into darkness and the moon into

blood, it shall still be said of this holy city, the new Jerusalem, that the glory of God does lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. See how blessedly God and the Lamb are linked together, for Father and Son are truly one. It is also pleasant to reflect that He who is “the light of the world” is also the light of the world that is yet to be revealed, “The Lamb is the light thereof.”

24. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

This is the church of the latter days, the beginning of the heavenly state, a true type of what the eternal glory of the saints will be. The church will no longer, like her Lord, be despised and rejected of men, but the highest and greatest among men shall count it an honor and glory to be permitted to share its blessings and triumphs.

25. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

Well did Dr. Doddridge sing,

*“No rude alarms of raging foes
No cares to break the long repose.
No midnight shade, no clouded sun
But sacred, high, eternal noon.”*

The saints will then be able to bear that eternal noontide, for the sun shall not smite them by day. And they will have no need of the night which is now so necessary for resting our wearied bodies and minds, so “there shall be no night there.” There will also be no night of sorrow, no night of sin, no night of death in that blessed land of light.

26-27. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life. [See Sermon #1590, The Barrier]

That holy city would itself be defiled if anything that defiles could enter into it. Only they who are written in the Lamb’s book of life shall be found in the glorious city of which He is the light.

*“Those holy gates forever bar
Pollution, sin, and shame.
None can obtain admittance there
But followers of the Lamb.”*

REVELATION 22

Verse 1. *And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

Here again we have God and the Lamb uniting in giving that “water of life” which flows down to us by God’s grace through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God.

2. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. [See Sermon #1233, Healing Leaves]

The fruit of this “tree of life” is for all those who have partaken of the water of life and the tree provides medicine as well as food, “the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

3-5. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

This is the climax of the saints' blessedness, "They shall reign for ever and ever." Thus are they to be like their Lord, for "He shall reign for ever and ever." As they shared His reproach, they shall also share His glory.

6-9. *And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.*

It was a pardonable mistake that John made, but it was a mistake, for even the highest angel in heaven must not be accorded the worship that is due to God alone.

10-11. *And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*

If your character is not what it ought to be, you must not delay your appeal to Him who alone can change it, "for the time is at hand," when your character and state will be fixed forever. As when there is a sharp frost, the water in the brooks are soon congealed, so are there influences at work which are consolidating character. Beware lest Christ's coming or the summons through death should find you unprepared and so cause you to remain forever just as you now are.

12. *And behold, I come quickly. and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*

There will be no change possible when Christ comes as the Judge of all mankind. If you are then filthy, you will be filthy forever. If you are then holy, you will be holy forever. The delusion of universal salvation must be banished from the minds of all who believe the Word of God.

13-17. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* [See Sermons #279, Come and Welcome. #1331, The Two "Comes." #1608, The Double "Come" and #2685, The Oft-Repeated Invitation]

This "Come" seems to sound both ways from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven. Christ says to us, "Come," and we cry to Him, "Come." Oh, that sinners would be obedient to the divine "Come," and "take the water of life freely," for then would the second coming of Christ be full of joy to them and not a matter of dread.

18-19. *For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

God's revelation is perfect—to add to it or to take from it would equally mar it, and the terrible threats here given concerning those who do either the one or the other ought to prevent so great a crime against high heaven. Yet, alas! many have dared and still dare to commit it.

20. *He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.*

All those centuries ago, Jesus said, "I am coming quickly." How much nearer His coming must be, and how earnestly we too should cry, "Even so come, Lord Jesus."

21. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

The Old Testament ended with a curse, the New Testament ends with benediction. Oh, that we might all have a share of it.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.